

From: Paul Steiner, Executive Director of Tobacco Free Michigan

The Tobacco Free Michigan Action Coalition strongly opposes the House bill 4485. Removing the sunset provision from the cigar tax provision will result in the cigar tax effectively declining over time as a result of inflation. Ideally we would like to see the cigar provision removed entirely and have it be taxed as other tobacco products are. This would not only reduce the impact that tobacco has on our public health but result in a simpler tax code, increased revenue that could be directed to cessation and prevention efforts which Michigan currently ranks 48th in the country in terms of recommended CDC levels, and greater equality for smokers.

We strongly believe that the science behind smoking behavior makes this the best public policy for Michigan's health. However, we realize that this is unlikely to happen for a variety of "reasons". At a minimum we encourage you to implement either 1) a new higher rate with a new sunset provision or 2) a new rate that is indexed to inflation.

Michigan used to be a leader in tobacco tax policy and saw great declines in smoking rates, particularly youth smoking rates, as a result. However we have failed to keep up with the national average and have seen the negative public health consequences as a result. We strongly encourage all committee members to vote no on this amendment as not only does it fail to keep Michigan in-line with the nation but will actually move us further and further behind over time.

Thank you,

Paul Steiner

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Paul Steiner (he/him)

Executive Director